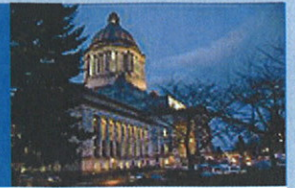


K-12 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

21st Legislative District Town Hall



March 21, 2009

Key Facts:

- Equal opportunity starts with a high-quality education for every child.
- In the past two years, we've invested more than \$1 billion in new funding for education. We cannot move backwards in our commitment to educating our children, especially during these tough economic times.
- Our first priority is rewriting the way we fund education. It's not just about more money, but better use of it. The 1970s-era model in place now doesn't meet today's 21st century needs.
- We must also continue to tackle the persistent achievement gap. But an equitable education for all students can't be accomplished just from Olympia – it requires a commitment from parents, teachers and community leaders as well.

Our state's constitution is clear: K-12 Education is our paramount duty. From rewriting how we fund basic education, to keeping kids from dropping out, House Democrats are committed to keeping our promise to provide every child with a quality education that prepares them for success in life and work.

Overhauling how we fund basic education and helping schools deal with their current financial challenges

- **Basic Education Finance** – Seeks to make the most sweeping reforms to our K-12 funding system in 30 years. It starts with a redefinition of “basic education,” the legal and constitutional basis for what the state is required to fund. It will also ensure that any new requirements on schools or teachers come with funding to pay for them. (HB 2261)
- **Pupil Transportation** – Changes the formula used to calculate how much the state provides districts for transportation to better reflect the actual costs of bussing students to school. (HB 2041)
- **Eliminating Unfunded Mandates** – Temporarily lifts, repeals, or amends certain requirements that cost school districts money but aren't considered high priority activities. It focuses primarily on administrative and reporting requirements. (HB 2167)

Help every student succeed and graduate on time

- **Improving Our Assessment System** – Washington is currently making many improvements to the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). This is particularly true of the math and science portions of the test. In the process of improving that system, however, we've seen certain short-term issues arise that could negatively affect high school students.
 - HB 1646 calls upon the State Board of Education to ensure reliable assessments for math and science are available before making passage of those tests a graduation requirement.
 - HB 1562 addresses a misunderstanding about graduation requirements for the classes of 2009-2012 and clarifies that these students can meet graduation requirements by either passing the 10th grade math WASL or earning two math credits after their sophomore year.
- **Pathways to Graduation & Higher Education**
 - HB 1355 creates the Opportunity Internships Program to form a partnership between schools and employers with the goal of helping low-income high school students get training and education in high-demand industry jobs.

- HB 1418 establishes a Drop-Out Reengagement Program to provide education and services to older youth who have dropped out of school or don't expect to graduate from high school by the age of 21.
- HB 1758 allows students who have earned an AA degree at a community or technical college (including high school students in Running Start), or who complete certain professional-technical degrees, to receive a high school diploma.
- ***Educational Opportunity for Military Children*** – Washington state is home to nearly 30,000 school-age children who come from military families. These families tend to move frequently causing unique challenges for those students. HB 1075 takes the lead from work recently completed by a state Military Compact Task Force, and includes Washington in a 16-state compact that helps families better track the records of their children and facilitates the placement of students in appropriate classes and activities.

Fulfilling our commitment to an equitable education for all students

- ***Parent and Community Involvement*** – HB 1762 establishes a "Student Bill of Rights" that encourages greater parent and community involvement by requiring school districts to communicate to students and parents the range of rights afforded them, including the right to be treated respectfully, have questions answered and messages returned in a timely manner, receive timely communications from schools, have access to education records in accordance with state and federal laws, and more.
- ***Closing the Achievement Gap*** – The data is undeniable: Certain student populations continue to lag behind on test scores and other measures of student success. In 2008, the Legislature commissioned five studies so we may better understand the unique challenges facing those student populations such as African-Americans, Asian Pacific Islanders, and others.

HB 2147 takes its cue from the results of those studies and establishes an Achievement Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. This will oversee and assure we advise education-policy leaders on effective measures to close the achievement gap, foster public accountability for achieving excellence and equity in public education, and promote a greater sense of urgency and priority.

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